THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

SELF-CONCEPT OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT

by

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled SELF-CONCEPT OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT submitted by ROBERT WAYNE BENNETT in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION.

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ABSTRACT

Recent research has demonstrated the importance of self-concept in understanding human behavior. Utilizing the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (T.S.C.S.) in testing subjects at Grant MacEwan Community College (G.M.C.C.), this study was designed to:

A. determine the difference in self-concept between regular students (those possessing a high school diploma) and mature students (those not possessing a high school diploma),

B. determine the change in self-concept of both regular and mature students after successful completion of one term at G.M.C.C.,

C. determine the difference in self-concept between students who were not successful in the first term and students who were successful.

The T.S.C.S. was administered during the first week of September, 1974 to 178 freshmen students in seven programs of study. The T.S.C.S. was re-administered during the last week of classes to 108 students who had written the pre-test. The data was then subjected to *t* tests to determine significant differences in means and variances.

The results indicated that there was no significant difference in self-concept between regular and mature students, that no significant change in self-concept occurred for either regular or mature students after successful completion of one trimester and that students who withdrew from G.M.C.C. or were deemed unsuccessful had a self-concept

that was significantly lower than students deemed successful.

Assuming that students have a low self-concept at the time of and prior to withdrawal, and/or failure in an academic setting, as evidenced by this study and other research, the data of this study suggested that people are able to develop self perception of worthiness through non-academic experiences. It was also suggested that formal education alone is not a sufficient condition for enhancement of the self-concept.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In man's attempt to understand man, many variables have been postulated as being important by psychologists, sociologists, educators, philosophers, psychiatrists, and theologians. Many of these professional groups have come to view the self-concept as an important construct in terms of understanding people and their behavior. It has been proposed (Fitts, 1965b) that if an individual's self-concept is known, much can be predicted about his behavior. Fitts et al (1971) maintain that an individual's concept of himself somehow cuts across, condenses, or captures the essence of many other variables (motives, needs, attitudes, personality, etc.), and thus enables all interested in human behavior to have a simpler and more central variable with which to deal.

A growing body of knowledge of self-concept and its relation to behavior is indicating that there is a direct link (relationship) between how one perceives himself and how he behaves. Direct relationships have been discovered between self-concept and academic achievement (Brookover, 1967; Coppersmith, 1967; William and Cole, 1968; Dreyfuss, 1968; Manson, 1969; Davis, 1969; Gay, 1966; Purkey, 1970), career certainty (Wigent, 1974), self-actualization (Lynch, 1968; Lansman, 1968; Fitts et al, 1971; Vargas, 1968; Seeman, 1969; Duncan, 1966), delinquency (Fitts and Hammer, 1969), intellectual efficiency (Gay, 1966; Williams and Cole, 1968; Pegg, 1968; Pugh, 1969; Seeman, 1966; Duncan, 1966), level of adjustment (Rogers and Dymond, 1954),

persistence (Baron and Bass, 1969; Burkett, 1972; Tiffany, Cowan and Tiffany, 1970; Hendron, 1970), personality integration (Fitts, 1965b), psychopathologies (Fitts, 1972c). social status (Williams and Cole, 1968), identification (Miller, 1970; Bealmer et al., 1970), and interpersonal competence (Coopersmith, 1967; Diggory, 1968; Rosenthal, 1965; Swan, 1970; Fitts, 1970; Stewart and Wagner, 1969; Faunce, 1967).

Research is indicating that the behaviorally effective and ineffective can be identified in a variety of ways, but no variable appears to be more consistent in its association with behavioral competence than self-concept (Fitts et al., 1971). Gilmore (1971) states that self-concept has reached such prominence that it has been postulated as the most significant factor distinguishing the productive from the non-productive individual. An individual's self-concept is positively related to his usefulness to society.

More and more there is a deepening interest in the individual's perception of himself and his situation as a major influence on his behavior. Recent theorists such as Combs and Snygg (1959), Coopersmith (1967). Diggory (1966), Fitts (1971), Rogers (1951), Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968), and many others believe that the maintenance and enhancement of the perceived self is the motive behind all behavior. Each of us is constantly striving to maintain, protect and enhance the self of which he is aware. If this is true, then it follows that experience is perceived in terms of its relevance to the self and that behavior is determined by these perceptions.

If the phenomenology and self-theorists are correct in their assumption, then a complete understanding of self-concept will advance

man to the point where he can not only understand his fellow man, but he will be able to construct programs (educational, social and institutional) to make self-actualization a possibility for everyone.

THE PROBLEM

Research in the area of self-concept and its relation to academic performance indicate that an educational institution can have a positive or negative effect upon the self-concept of students. Psychologists and educators are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that a person's idea of himself, or self-concept, is closely connected to how he behaves, perceives and learns. Indeed, it is becoming more obvious that the most important ideas which affect a student's behavior are those ideas or conceptions that he has about himself, which, in part, are a consequence of his school experience.

Brookover and his associates (1964) made a useful distinction regarding the role of self-concept and academic achievement. His research indicated that the possession of a high, positive self-concept does not necessarily result in academic achievement, but that a high, positive self-concept seems to be a necessary characteristic to have prior to achievement. However, it is no guarantee that high achievement will follow.

When addressing the question of "which comes first, a positive self concept or high achievement" it must be admitted that at the present time there is no definite answer to this question. However, as Hamachek (1971) states:

...even though it is not possible to say with precision

> which comes first, good school work or high self-regard, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that each is mutually reinforcing the other to the extent that a positive change in one facilitates a positive change in the other.

Fitts and Richard (1971) also prefer an interaction explanation wherein a good self-concept contributes to effective performance, which in turn contributes to a healthy self-concept.

Data collected by Flemister (1967) and Faunce (1967) on school drop-outs and potential school drop-outs indicates that drop-outs are more likely to have low self-esteem, being more deviant in terms of defensiveness, have more difficulty with self-definition and have more dissonance and conflict in their self-concepts.

It has also been demonstrated (Meese, 1961; Boyle, 1967) that the self-concept, once clearly differentiated and structured, is a fairly stable entity. From this information, then, it may be contended that an adult entering a post-secondary institute without a high school diploma will have a lower, less healthy self-concept than a student who was successful in completing high school.

There is a great deal left to be discovered about what affects the self-concept. Fitts (1971, p. 38) hypothesizes that the self-concept is most strikingly affected by:

1. Experience, especially interpersonal experiences which generate positive feelings and a sense of value and worth.
2. Competence in areas that are valued by the individual and others.
3. Self-actualization, or the implementation and realization

of one's true personal potentialities whatever they may be.

A positive, successful academic experience, then, should have an influence on self-concept change of college students, especially if the experience is viewed as self-actualizing and developing competence and if previous experiences were negative and unsuccessful. From this, one might assume that the student who was not successful in high school and then successful in college would have a positive change in self-concept, assuming that the successful completion of the program was of importance and value to the student. Also, because of the relative stability of the self-concept during the adult years, one would believe that a successful academic experience at the post-secondary level would have little or no influence upon the self-concept of students who have had previous successful academic experiences.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether those who have obtained a high school diploma have a self-concept which is different from those who have not, whether the self-concept can be changed in a positive manner through a successful academic experience and whether students deemed not successful in their academic experience have a self-concept that is different from those deemed successful.

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND RESEARCH

Traditionally, psychology has been under the influence of two major schools of thought: psychoanalysis and behaviorism. In recent years, a "third force" representing the humanistic orientation has attempted to gain a foothold in the behavioral science of psychology.

Humanistic psychology embraces the areas of existentialism (expressing the individual's intense awareness of his own existence and freedom to choose among alternatives for behaving) and phenomenology (stating that realities lie not in the event but in the phenomena or the person's perception of the event). Humanistic psychology fits comfortably in the company of phenomenology and existentialism as it is an orientation which centers on human interests and values (Hamachek, 1971, p.46).

Present day Self theory falls into the framework of phenomenology. The main thesis of this point of view is that behavior is influenced not only by the accumulation of our past and present experiences, but even more importantly, it is influenced by the personal meanings we attach to our perception of those experiences.

THEORIES OF THE SELF

James

William James was one of the pioneers in engineering a system

of psychology of the self. In his two-volumn "Principals of Psychology" (1890), the longest chapter was entitled "The Consciousness of Self". In this, James maintained that one does not have a Self at birth, but that a sense of identity is eventually comprised of spiritual, material and social aspects. He said that the self develops to become the sum total of "I", the knower or experiencer, and "Me", the self that is known or experienced. Thus, subjective interpretations and feelings about the self were important to James.

Cooley

Charles Cooley's (1902) basic premise was that the Self imagines a perception of itself in the mind of another and this affects behavior. This has since been labelled "the Looking-Glass Self". The three elements to Cooley's self-idea are: (1) the imagination of one's appearance to the other person; (2) the imaginations of the other person's appraisal of that appearance; and (3) some kind of self-value feeling such as pride or shame, based on (1) and (2).

Mead

George Mead (1934) in describing the features of self-conception stated: "The Self, as that which can be an object to itself, is essentially a social structure, and it arises in social experience" (p. 140). In this social interactionist view, one thinks of himself as he believes others think of him. He will act how others expect people "like him" should act.

Mead emphasized the self as being an entity within itself.

He states, "The self has the characteristic that is an object to itself, and that characteristic distinguishes it from other objects and from the body" (p.13). He differentiated between the "I" and "me" of self but saw these constructs working in harmony and being developed through interaction with the environment.

Rogers

Carl Rogers, a phenomenologist, views the self as the central aspect of personality. He refers to the self, or concept of self, as the "organized, consistent, conceptual Gestalt composed of perceptions of the 'I' or 'me' and the perceptions of the relationships of the 'I' or 'me' to others and to various aspects of life, together with the values attached to these perceptions" (Corsini, 1973). Rogers believes that the self is a product of environment. It develops out of interpersonal relationships and a striving for consistency. When experiences are not consistent with the self-concept, they are threatening and may produce emotional disturbance. The "actualizing tendency", which is an inherent tendency for the individual to maintain and enhance the organism, is viewed as the motivating force in development of personality.

Combs and Snygg

In drawing from the theories of Adler, Lewin and Rogers, the theory proposed by Combs and Snygg (1959) goes as far into the realm of phenomenology as one can find. They state that ". . .all behavior, without exception, is completely determined by and pertinent to the phenomenal field of the behaving organism" (p.15). Behavior is determined by the totality of experience of which an individual is aware

of at an instant of action. This is his "phenomenal field". The total self, as experienced by the individual is labelled the "phenomenal self". This phenomenal self is the self as observed, experienced, and judged by the individual himself; this is the self of which he is aware. The sum total of all these awarenesses or perceptions is his image of himself--his self-concept. As other theorists have discriminated between the "I" and "me" of the self, Snygg and Combs (1959) saw the self as embodying the self-as-object and self-as-process.

Combs and Syngg (1949) take the view that lists of diverse and conflicting needs are not helpful in predicting behavior. They conclude that the individual is motivated to preserve "not his physical self, but the self of which he is aware, his phenomenal self" (p.56).

Fitts

William H. Fitts is one of the more recent proponents of self theory, and has done extensive research through a program entitled Studies on the Self-Concept and Rehabilitation (1964). It is Fitts' theoretical framework that this thesis is based upon. The conceptual framework parallels the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (T.S.C.S.) which is the instrument developed by Fitts and utilized in this study.

Drawing from and expanding on the theory of Snygg and Combs (1949), Fitts (1971) proposes three principle parts or sub-selves of the self. These are: self-as-object (Identity Self); self-as-doer (Behavioral Self); and, self-as-observer and judge (Judging Self).

Identity Self is the most basic aspect of the self. This

feature of the self establishes the "Who am I", complete with labels and symbols assigned to the self by the individual, such as male, student, bright, unwanted, ugly, athlete, etc.

The Behavioral Self interacts with and to some extent feeds the Identity Self. In many cases, one cannot assume an identity or label without first doing or experiencing. The Behavioral Self, in establishing "What do I do?", such as play tennis or retreat from people, provides material to the Identity Self, so that tennis player and introvert become incorporated into the self-concept.

Fitts (1971) states that one of man's capacities is his ability to be aware of himself, to observe himself in action, and to evaluate himself. The Judging Self functions as observer, standard setter, dreamer, comparer and most of all evaluator. It also serves as mediator between the other two selves, but does not act as the Freudian superego in that it is not entirely introjected from the values and standards of others.

Man has a tendency to assign values to perceptions of behavior, characteristics, feelings, etc. of others and of the self. The tendency to evaluate the self is a primary component of self-perception, and it provides the material or sustenance for self-esteem, which is a primary concern for most people (Coopersmith, 1967). Self-esteem is related to self-concept in that changes in the self-concept that involve a lowered self-esteem are threatening and therefore resisted. The Judging Self is the sub-self that attends primarily to self-esteem in viewing the Behavioral Self and saying "That is good" and the Identity

Self in saying "I am good".

In Fitts' theorizing, he sees the three previously discussed selves from an internal frame of reference and as the broadest view of looking at one's self-concept. But there are many other sub-selves that are of a more specific nature, such as self as professional, self as lover, self as student, self as citizen, etc. The sub-selves that have the most general applicability are the five measured by the T.S.C.S. and are: Physical Self, Moral-Ethical Self, Personal Self, Family Self, and Social Self. Each of these selves as examined from an external frame of reference, contain elements of the three main internal selves.

The degree of internal consistency between and within these sub-selves should be related to integration and to the effectiveness with which the total self functions. For this reason, consistency or variability across the sub-selves, and internal consistency in self-definition contribute to a definition of a person as well integrated or not.

As Fitts (1971, p. 22) states,

> It can be seen then, that there are many aspects of self-concept to be considered in attempting its measurement. We cannot accept the assumption which many researchers apparently make that the self-concept is a single construct, reportable in a single score. Such an over-simplification may ignore the complexity and uniqueness of each individual.

SELF-CONCEPT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Research evidence is showing a significant relationship between the self-concept and academic achievement. Psychologists and

educators are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that a person's idea of himself, or self-concept, is closely connected to how he behaves, perceives and learns. Indeed, it is becoming more obvious that the most important ideas which affect a student's behavior are those ideas or conceptions that he has about himself. In fact, Brookover (1967) in studying self image and its relationship to achievement, questioned the popular assumption that ability is the most important factor in achievement. He stated that the student's attitude is the main factor in determining the level of achievement in school.

One of the first people to research this area was Lecky (1945), whose study showed that low academic achievement may be related to a student's perception of himself as being unable to learn academic material. That is, low academic achievement was often the result of a child defining himself as a non-learner. Walsh (1956), found that those who were classified as having high ability and low achievement had a negative concept of self when compared with those of high ability and high achievement. Benjamins (1955) and Pegg (1970) demonstrated that a person's self-concept has a direct bearing on his intellectual efficiency. Brookover, Thomas, and Paterson (1964) found a statistically significant positive correlation between self-concept and perceived evaluations of significant others, general performance in academic subjects and achievement in specific subject matter fields.

In another study, Forquhar (1968) demonstrated that over and under-achievers at the grade eleven level respond differently to items measuring self-concept and that students classified as over-achievers tended to have higher self-concepts.

Irwin (1967) concluded with the following remarks after studying the reported self-concepts and academic achievement of freshmen college students:

> It may well be that a positive conception of one's self as a person is not only more important than striving to get ahead and enthusiasm for studying and going to school, but that it is a central factor when considering optimal scholastic performance.

In studying junior high school students who were identified by school staff as potential school dropouts, Faunce (1967) confirmed that those identified as likely to drop out had lower measured self-concept scores than the control group. Also, the potential dropouts were not as deviant in their self-concepts as those who had in fact dropped out of school.

Flemister (1967) using the T.S.C.S. compared students in school to a group that had dropped out. The data provided additional evidence that dropouts are more likely to have low self-concepts. The results indicated that they are also more likely to be deviant in terms of defensiveness, to have more difficulty with self-definition and to have more dissonance and conflict in their self-concepts.

Hendron (1970) in studying high school dropouts provided more evidence that dropouts are likely to hold themselves in low esteem. Reinherz and Griffin (1971) conducted a study of junior high school students who had failed a grade or had been held back on one or more occasions. Using the T.S.C.S., the greatest difference was found on Column D (Family Self) between those with a history of academic failure and those who had never failed.

In a similar study of junior high school students, Godfrey (1970) examined those who had not repeated any grades, had repeated one grade and had repeated two or more grades. Differences were significant between all groups on almost every scale of the T.S.C.S.

These studies lend more support to the hypothesis that academic failure and low self-concepts are closely associated, although they do not answer the cause and effect question.

Because we are living in an achievement oriented society, one might consider years of schooling to be an important variable in predicting self-concept. Although there has recently been a great proliferation of studies examining the relationship between self-concept and educational level, there still seems to be no definite answer.

Piety (1958) found little relationship ($r = .09$) existed between years of education and Total P (self-esteem) on the T.S.C.S. Research by Corrigan (1970) in studying American Indians and Monson (1969) in studying unemployed adults both showed no significant difference in self-concept between those who had graduated from high school and those who had not. Schwab, Clemmons and Mordes (1966) in studying general hospital patients, Harrington (1971) in studying Air Force Officers and Brooks (1970) in studying community college teachers all concluded that there is no relationship between self-concept and years of formal education.

Fitts (1972, p. 26) has the following opinion:

> The issue of the relationship between self-concept and education has great potential import. Should there be

> a high correlation between the two variables, which present evidence does not support, it would be a disappointing finding in a supposedly democratic society. The apparent lack of substantial correlation is gratifying in the sense that, for most people, feelings of value and worth are not dependent upon years of formal education. The low correlations also imply that the answer to low self-concept change and improvement does not lie in academic education alone.

Factors Affecting Self-Concept

What, then, does influence the self-concept? Wylie (1961) and Fitts (1971) conclude that there have been no longitudinal studies on which to base a description of the development of the self-concept. But several studies have shed light on some factors that do influence the self-concept.

Two significant studies using the T.S.C.S. suggest that children's behavior and self-concepts are affected by their parents' self-concept. Bealmer et al. (1965) found that the self-concepts of children aged eight to ten was similar to that of their parents. Where one or both parents had healthy, positive self-concepts, the childrens' concepts tended to be positive also. Another study by Coleman, Freeman and Owens (1966) studied emotionally disturbed children, aged six to twelve, and their parents, and found that the parents themselves were somewhat disturbed people with negative and deviant self-concepts. In fact, the study indicated that the specific nature of the parents' self-concepts is related to the type of emotional disturbance in the child.

Age, also, seems to be a relevant factor in determining self-concept. Grant (1966) used the T.S.C.S. on 500 individuals between the

ages of twenty and sixty-nine and factor analyzed the responses by 10-year age intervals. Her conclusions were:

> The feelings which a person reports about himself tend to become more positive with age. . . Feelings about oneself. . .seem to reflect developmental changes throughout adulthood. In effect, peoples self attitudes do change, and to some extent they change as a function of age.

Other research efforts by Shaftel and Shaftel (1967) and Vaughn (1970) in studying children, suggest that up to a certain period in life the self-concept is relatively unstable, however, once stabilized even a number of successes seldom provide the motivation to change an individual's evaluation of himself. This is consistent with the position taken by many self theorists such as Combs and Snygg (1959), Jersild (1960), Sullivan (1953) and Fitts (1971) when they state that the self-concept, once clearly differentiated and structured, is a fairly stable entity.

There are other factors that affect the self-concept. One of Purkey's (1970) basic postulates is that the self-concept is learned and modified through interpersonal relations. No child is born with a concept of himself. A self-concept is developed through interactions with others, particularly significant others, in his life (Combs and Snygg, 1959; Coopersmith, 1967). The actions of significant others such as teachers (Combs and Soper, 1963; Davidson and Long, 1960) also have a definite effect on the developmental and/or change of an individual's self-concept.

Other factors such as aptitudes, abilities and skills as studied by Zakrajsek (1966) and Christian (1969) have demonstrated clear,

positive relationships between self-concept and indices of physical, motor and athletic abilities.

There is little doubt in the minds of self theorists and self-concept researchers that the self-concept is affected by the experiences one has had, but also the self-concept influences the manner in which one approaches and utilizes new experiences. Lynch (1968) in studying intense human experiences and self-concept found that people with high self-concepts reported more pleasurable life experiences than those with low self-concepts. Also, those with high self-concepts were more apt to report that negative experiences had led to positive growth. Similarly, Vargas (1968) found that those with high self-concepts described their early childhood experiences more positively than those with low self-concepts.

There are few longitudinal studies which explore the effects of significant experiences and life changes on the self-concept. One study of special interest to this thesis by Fitts, Liles and Wilson (1973) studied the change in self-concept in students during four years at Vanderbilt University. One hundred subjects completed the T.S.C.S. as entering freshmen and seventy one subjects completed the questionnaire during their last week as seniors. The total group presented a normal picture on pre-testing and little uniform change was displayed as seniors, although some individuals showed marked change in self-concept. The slight changes that did occur were desirable in that the graduating seniors were better satisfied with themselves, had more internally consistent self-concepts, showed greater personality integration and better overall mental health. Whether the slight movement of self-concept

in a desirable direction was a result of academic achievement is difficult to ascertain as there were no control or comparison groups. The movement may have been a function of increased age, added maturity, or other factors.

What this study did indicate was that changes in self-concept were in part a function of initial self-concept. The group was divided into four sub-groups--low, middle, high and high defensive positive initial self-concept. The low self-esteem group showed significant positive changes, the middle self-esteem group showed little change and the high defensive group--screened out from the original high group because their self-concepts were the product of defensive distortion--changed in a downward manner. Even though the direction of movement for the high defensive positive group was in an opposite direction to the desirable changes occuring in the other groups, the changes were positive in that their defensive rigidity and distortion decreased, as did their artificially high self-esteem. As a result of movements in opposite directions, the total group results, indicating little change, were in fact misleading. Closer analysis of the data indicated that the self-concepts of the subjects did change over four years at university, and generally in a positive, healthy direction. In considering the effects of the college experience, Fitts, Liles and Wilson conclude:

> The total experience confirms or even enhances an already positive view of self for some students, modifies and improves for some a dubious, negative self-image while shattering a poor self-concept for others. The college experience helps still others who enter college with grossly distorted and idealized self-concepts to progress toward more realistic view of themselves, and perhaps of people in general.

SUMMARY

The literature relating to self-concept and academic performance is somewhat contradicting and confusing. Studies have indicated that dropouts and those who fail tend to have lower measured self-concepts than those who have been successful in school. Other studies have shown little or no relationship between years of formal education and self-concept. To date, almost no research has been conducted to determine the long term effects of withdrawal and/or failure on self-concept.

Relatively little is known about the susceptibility of self-concept to change. Indications are that the self-concept can be changed through various forms of therapy, but little is known about self-concept change through everyday experiences. As Leeper (1959) states:

> . . .it does appear, however, that ordinary people, going about their everyday life, sometimes experience some considerable changing of their concepts as to what is most real about themseleves. For a well-rounded knowledge of how personality may be purposefully changed, we need much more information about changes which occur without benefit of therapy.

It is hypothesized by Fitts (1971) that the self-concept is most affected by experiences, development of competence and self-actualization. Initial self-concept also seems to be an important factor in determining change.

In consideration of present findings relating to self-concept and achievement, then, the following questions may be posed: Do individuals deemed not successful, either through withdrawal or failure, indeed have a low self-concept? What are the long term effects of withdrawal or failure on self-concept? Is success in an academic

program the answer or partial answer to improving self-concept?

More longitudinal studies are needed to determine the effects of educational experiences on self-concept. It is hoped that this study will shed more light on the questions posed.

DEFINITIONS

Self Concept:

The self-concept can be defined as all traits, values and feelings that are perceived, experienced and accepted by an individual. For the purpose of this study, self-concept will be considered equivalent to self-esteem and will be operationally defined as the Total Positive score on the T.S.C.S.

Regular Student:

A regular student is one who is considered to have been successful in secondary school. He is defined at Grant MacEwan Community College and will operationally defined in this study as a student who possesses an Alberta High School Diploma or its equivalent.

Mature Student:

A mature student is one who is not considered to have been successful in secondary school. He is defined at Grant MacEwan Community College and will be operationally defined in this study as a student who does not possess an Alberta High School Diploma or its equivalent, is at least eighteen years of age and has been out of school for at least one year.

Successful Completion:

The majority of students at Grant MacEwan Community College take five or six courses. Successful completion is operationally defined in this study as a pass in four or more courses.

Grant MacEwan Community College will hereafter be referred to as the College.

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1:

There will be no difference in self-concept between regular students and mature students entering the College.

Hypothesis 2:

There will be no significant change in self-concept of mature students after successful completion of one trimester at the College.

Hypothesis 3:

There will be no significant change in self-concept of regular students after successful completion of one trimester at the College.

Hypothesis 4:

There will be no difference in initial self-concept between successful and non-successful students at the College.

LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE

For the purpose of this study, an acceptance level of p. 05 on the Total P scale will be utilized.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to examine and test several aspects of self-concept as related to academic success and failure.

SUBJECTS

The subjects used for the testing of the null hypotheses varied with each null hypothesis. The subjects tested for null hypothesis 1 are students in the first trimester of the following programs: Social Service Worker, Youth Development, Early Childhood Development, Urban Social Planner, Travel Consultant, Law Clerk and Accounting. These subjects are considered to be a sample of the first trimester student population at the College and subjects used in testing the subsequent null hypotheses are drawn from this sample.

A different group of subjects is tested for each hypothesis, although there is overlap between the groups, for the following reasons: criteria for testing and participation in testing.

The subjects tested for null hypothesis 2 were all mature students who were considered successful in completing the first term at the College and who had written the pre-test in September and the post-test in December.

The subjects tested for null hypothesis 3 were all regular students who were considered successful in completing the first term at the College and who had written the pre-test in September and the post-test in December.

In testing null hypothesis 4, the subjects selected were both regular and mature students who had written the pre-test in September and then either dropped out of the College or were deemed unsuccessful by not passing four or more courses.

Table 1 shows the subjects tested for each null hypothesis.

TABLE 1

STATUS, NUMBERS AND $\bar{X}$ AGE OF SUBJECTS TESTED FOR 4 NULL HYPOTHESES

HYPOTHESES	STATUS	MALE	FEMALE	$\bar{X}$ AGE
Ho_1	Mature	21	37	26.8
	Regular	19	102	21.7
Ho_2	Mature	9	17	24.6
Ho_3	Regular	10	65	21.9
Ho_4	Mature	6	7	24.3
	Regular	7	12	21.6

Grant MacEwan Community College is a multi-campus tax-tuition supported college in its fourth year of operation in the City of Edmonton, Alberta. Two year diplomas are offered from thirty-nine programs generally considered to be vocationally oriented and para-professional in nature. Due to the open door policy, low tuition fees and the nature of the programs, the student population is extremely varied in terms of age, socio-economic status, urban-rural background and academic achievement.

INSTRUMENTATION AND PROCEDURE

The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (T.S.C.S.) was administered during the first week of classes in September, 1974 to 178 freshem students. A data sheet was administered at the same time (Appendix A) gather more information than was requested on the T.S.C.S. answer sheets. The writer administered the instrument during regularly scheduled classes and followed standardized instructions (Appendix B). Students not present in class at the time of administration were not contacted.

The T.S.C.S. was administered again during the last week in December in the same scheduled classes to 108 students. Withdrawals, and the fact that many students were not present because they knew their grades and thus did not attend the classes, caused the reduction in numbers writing the post-test.

THE TENNESSEE SELF CONCEPT SCALE

The T.S.C.S., Clinical and Research Form (Fitts, 1965a) is simple to administer, well standardized, and multi-dimensional in its description of self-concept. The Scale consists of 100 self-description items, of which 90 assess the self-concept and 10 assess self-criticism (MMPI lie scale items). For each item, the respondent chooses one of five response options labelled from "completely false" to "completely true". The questionnaire is equally divided as to positive and negative items and yields twenty-nine variables.

A two dimensional facet design was used in constructing the

items. The following aspects of the self are measured: Identity, Self-Satisfaction, Behavior, Physical Self, Moral-Ethical Self, Personal Self, Family Self, and Social Self. In addition to the sub-selves, scores are derived for Total Positive, a measure of overall self-esteem; Variability, reflecting the amount of consistency from one area to another; Distribution, a measure of extremity response style; True-False ratio, another measure of response style; Conflict Scores, indicating response to positive vs. negative items; Empirical Scales, discriminating from various groups; and Number of Deviant Signs, which is a count of the number of deviant features on all other scores.

The norms were developed from a broad sample of 626 people as described in the T.S.C.S. Manual (Fitts, 1965a). Since then, a considerable amount of research has indicated that the norms are appropriate for a college population.

Test-retest reliability coefficients for all scores as reported in the Manual range from .60 to .92. The fact that distinctive features of individual profiles remain for most persons after one or more years provide additional evidence that the T.S.C.S. is a reliable instrument.

It is assumed that the items in the Scale are logically meaningful and possess content validity because of the manner in which the items were chosen. A pool of items were derived from a number of other self-concept measures (Balester, 1956; Engel, 1956; Taylor, 1953) and from written self descriptions of patients and non-patients. Items were edited and seven clinical psychologists were employed as judges to classify the items according to the phenomenal theory of Fitts. The

final 90 items utilized in the Scale to measure self-concept are those that had perfect agreement between the judges.

An approach used to determine the validity of the T.S.C.S. is to determine whether the scale is able to discriminate between groups. The Scale has proved successful in discriminating between psychiatric patients and non-patients mostly at the .001 level for all scores (T.S.C.S. Manual, 1965). Discrimination is also evident in the other direction for groups considered to be high in personality integration. The Scale has also proven to be capable of discriminating within patient groups so that certain patient groups can be distinguished on the basis of type of profile (eg., paranoid schizophrenics are distinguishable from depressive reactions). Hundreds of studies since the publication of the manual have indicated that the T.S.C.S. can and does discriminate between various groups (Fitts, 1972). In reviewing the T.S.C.S., Richard Suinn (1972) concludes, ". . .the T.S.C.S. ranks among the better measures combining group discrimination with self-concept information".

In providing further measures of validity, the T.S.C.S. Scales have been correlated with other measures of personality functioning. The Taylor Anxiety Scale correlates -.70 with Total Positive. Correlations from .50 to .70 are common with the Cornell Medical Index and an unpublished Inventory of Feelings. Correlations with various MMPI Scales are frequently in the .50's and .60's. Thus, ". . .it seems safe to conclude that the scale overlaps sufficiently with well-known measures to consider it a possible alternative for these measures in various applied situations" (Bentler, 1972).

Additional evidence for the validity of the instrument is

illustrated in terms of personality changes under particular conditions. Changes in self-concept scores have been made in a predictable direction where psychotherapy or other positive experiences would be expected to result in enhancement of the self-concept, while stress or failure would be expected to result in lowered self-esteem (Fitts, 1965).

In summary, then, the T.S.C.S. appears to be a reliable and valid instrument in measuring the construct of self-concept as theorized by W. H. Fitts.

SCORING

All answer sheets were coded by the writer indicating regular or mature student, program and individual. Answer sheets were then sent to the Dede Wallace Centre, Nashville, Tennessee for computer scoring. Complete profiles and punched I.B.M. data cards were returned for each answer sheet.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

In analyzing the data for the four null hypotheses, two different procedures were used.

Null Hypothesis 1

In testing this hypothesis, the ANOV 10 program of the Division of Educational Research Services, University of Alberta was used which carries out t tests between independent means and F tests for independent variances.

Null Hypothesis 2

In testing this hypothesis, the ANOV 12 program of the

Division of Educational Research Services, University of Alberta was used which carries out *t* tests for correlated means and variances.

Null Hypothesis 3

In testing this hypothesis, the ANOV 12 program of the Division of Educational Research Services, University of Alberta was used which carries out *t* tests for correlated means and variances.

Null Hypothesis 4

In testing this hypothesis, the ANOV 10 program of the Division of Educational Research Services, University of Alberta was used which carries out *t* tests between independent means and F tests for independent variances.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In attempting to answer the questions posed in Chapter II, results are reported as they relate to each null hypothesis. Table 2 is presented to facilitate interpretation of the tables and figures. A complete description of the T.S.C.S. scales may be found in Appendix C.

TABLE 2

A DESCRIPTION OF T.S.C.S. VARIABLES DISPLAYED IN TABLES AND FIGURES

SC.	Self criticism
T/F.	True-false ratio
Net C	Net conflict
Tot. C	Total conflict
Tot. P	Total positive
Row 1	Identity self
Row 2	Self satisfaction
Row 3	Behavior self
Col. A	Physical self
Col. B	Moral-ethical self
Col. C	Personal self
Col. D	Family self
Col. E	Social self
Tot. V	Total variability
Col. V	Column variability
Row V	Row variability
D	Distribution
5	Distribution of "5" responses
4	Distribution of "4" responses
3	Distribution of "3" responses
2	Distribution of "2" responses
1	Distribution of "1" responses
DP.	Defensive positive
GM.	General maladjustment
Psy.	Psychotic
PD.	Personality disorder
N.	Neurotic
PI.	Personality integration
NDS.	Number of deviant signs

Hypothesis 1

There will be no difference in self-concept between regular and mature students entering the College.

In Table 3, the difference between Total P mean score is insignificant so null hypothesis 1 is confirmed. The profiles of the two groups (Figure 1) illustrate the similarity in self-concept of regular and mature students. *t* tests for significance of difference between independent samples reveal that there are no significant differences on any scores. This is an unusual finding in that one could expect to find at least one or two differences on the basis of chance alone, when there are 29 variables being considered.

The homogeniety of the groups is also exemplified when examining the variance. Although F test for significance of difference between independent variances produce 6 scores that are significantly different, 3 of the scores are higher for the regular students and 3 are higher for the mature students.

Another salient feature of the profile is that all scores are very close to the T.S.C.S. norms. Of the 58 combined variables, only one (Mature, Number of Deviant Signs) falls outside one standard deviation from the mean.

TABLE 3

PRE-TEST GROUP MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE TESTS FOR 120 REGULAR STUDENTS AND 58 MATURE STUDENTS ON THE T.S.C.S. SCALES

Variable	Regular $\bar{X}$	Mature $\bar{X}$	t	Regular S.D.	Mature S.D.	F
SC	35.36	35.45	-0.19	5.52	5.61	1.28
T/F	1.05	1.06	-0.10	.28	.32	1.03
Net C	-4.52	-4.16	-0.16	13.49	15.02	1.24
Tot. C	31.67	33.71	-1.45	7.76	10.62	1.87**
Tot. P	339.93	340.12	-0.04	29.77	25.48	1.36
Row 1	123.87	123.45	0.26	10.46	8.99	1.35
Row 2	106.37	106.79	-0.22	12.52	11.50	1.19
Row 3	109.70	109.88	-0.10	10.95	9.60	1.30
Col. A	67.56	68.55	-0.84	8.06	5.86	1.89**
Col. B	69.40	69.28	0.10	7.40	8.27	1.25
Col. C	65.16	66.07	-0.82	7.29	6.08	1.44
Col. D	69.48	67.64	1.31	9.25	7.73	1.43
Col. E	68.33	68.59	-0.22	7.19	7.42	1.07
Tot. V	45.73	46.28	-0.29	11.48	11.48	1.00
Col. V	26.69	26.98	-0.24	7.36	7.63	1.08
Row V	19.04	19.29	-0.26	6.09	5.68	1.15
D	108.99	108.29	0.19	22.87	23.11	1.02
5	14.04	14.95	-0.64	8.64	9.19	1.13
4	26.83	24.90	1.55	7.65	8.14	1.13
3	22.36	24.19	-1.18	9.02	11.04	1.50
2	19.46	18.43	0.87	7.42	7.44	1.01
1	17.31	17.53	-0.16	8.95	8.47	1.12
DP	55.67	56.26	-0.40	9.84	7.94	1.54*
GM	94.73	95.43	-0.51	8.82	7.98	1.22
Psy.	48.22	49.36	-1.21	5.41	6.85	1.60*
PD	72.85	70.64	1.47	9.04	10.22	1.27
N	81.32	80.93	0.25	10.48	8.06	1.69*
PI	10.53	10.62	-0.16	3.85	3.78	1.04
NDS	11.44	13.90	-1.24	10.72	15.40	2.06**

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

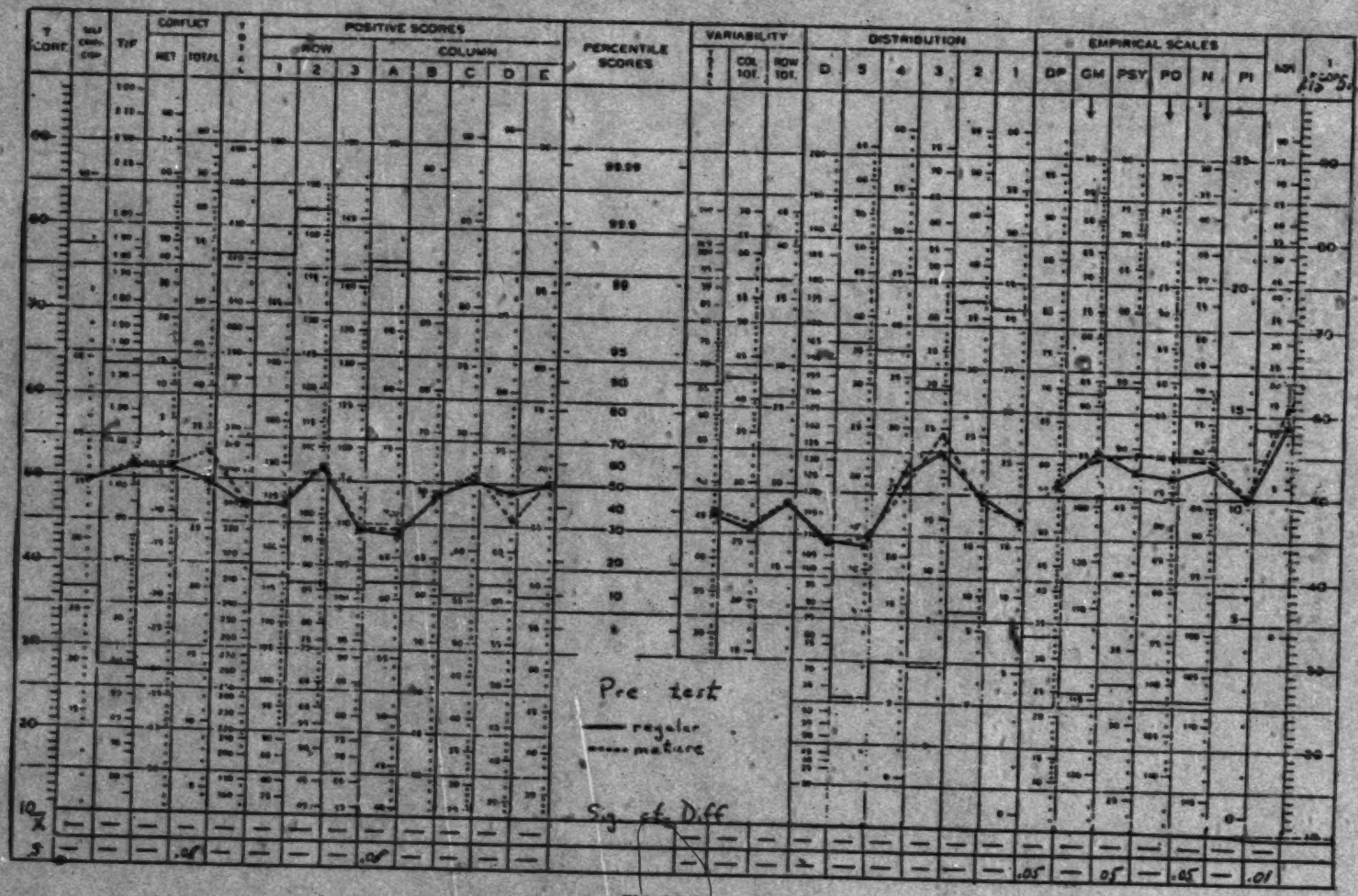

FIGURE 1

PRE-TEST MEANS AND SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR REGULAR (N=120) AND MATURE (N=58) STUDENTS

Hypothesis 2

There will be no significant change in self-concept of mature students after successful completion of one trimester at the College.

In Table 4, the change in Total P mean score is insignificant, so null hypothesis 2 is confirmed. However, *t* tests for significance of difference between correlated means produce a significant difference on 4 variables--Total Conflict, Total Variability, Column Variability and Row Variability. As shown in Figure 2, all 4 changes are in a positive, healthy direction. The lowered Total Conflict score indicates less confusion and contradiction in self perception within the same area of self perception. The lowered variability scores indicate less variation between the sub-selves. All variability scores on the post-tests are below the 50th percentile suggesting internally consistent, well-integrated self-concepts. Therefore, the significant changes in mean scores indicates that mature students, after 4 months of successful study, did not experience a change in self-esteem, but they did perceive themselves as more internally consistent and less confused.

t tests for significance of difference between correlated variances show significant changes on 13 variables. All these variances are higher on the post-test, along with 9 other variances that are higher but not significant. This indicates a significant amount of individual movement within the group without influencing the total group mean scores. It also indicates that individual movement is toward more extreme scores on the post-test.

TABLE 4

PRE AND POST GROUP MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE TESTS FOR 26 SUCCESSFUL MATURE STUDENTS ON THE T.S.C.S. SCALES

Variable	Pre $\bar{X}$	Post $\bar{X}$	t	Pre S.D.	Post S.D.	t
SC	34.92	34.77	-0.05	6.17	5.60	-0.12
T/F	1.05	1.05	0.17	.30	.29	-0.68
Net C	-5.70	-4.04	-0.79	12.95	13.47	0.27
Tot. C	34.85	30.42	2.61**	10.97	8.32	-1.80
Tot. P	347.70	346.65	0.16	20.91	43.40	5.25**
Row 1	125.42	121.19	1.25	7.92	18.52	5.13**
Row 2	109.81	112.65	-1.29	11.40	15.15	1.95
Row 3	112.46	112.81	-0.15	8.64	13.41	2.57*
Col. A	70.12	69.42	0.41	5.25	9.38	3.35**
Col. B	72.31	70.81	1.06	6.62	9.25	2.18*
Col. C	67.31	68.27	-0.64	5.18	10.17	4.98**
Col. D	68.85	69.08	-0.11	7.85	10.68	1.67
Col. E	69.12	69.08	0.03	7.72	9.03	0.98
Tot. V	48.35	41.00	2.90**	12.55	12.83	0.13
Col. V	27.81	23.89	2.30*	9.01	8.93	-0.05
Row V	20.54	17.12	2.70**	5.47	5.18	-0.29
D	117.15	116.12	0.26	18.93	26.23	2.17*
5	16.89	16.85	0.02	8.34	11.65	2.31*
4	24.42	24.70	-0.16	7.83	10.08	1.40
3	20.58	20.27	0.16	7.53	10.39	1.80
2	17.27	18.62	-0.98	7.76	8.15	0.30
1	20.85	19.54	0.90	7.99	9.27	0.97
DP	58.90	59.54	-0.92	7.85	11.86	2.94**
GM	97.65	95.69	0.93	6.84	13.43	4.58**
Psy.	49.04	49.92	-0.64	5.93	5.53	-0.36
PD	73.58	73.92	-0.24	8.38	11.13	2.20*
N	81.96	83.61	-0.88	7.20	12.63	3.95**
PI	10.45	11.23	-1.43	3.30	4.08	1.60
NDS	11.58	13.69	-0.67	10.74	17.24	2.68**

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

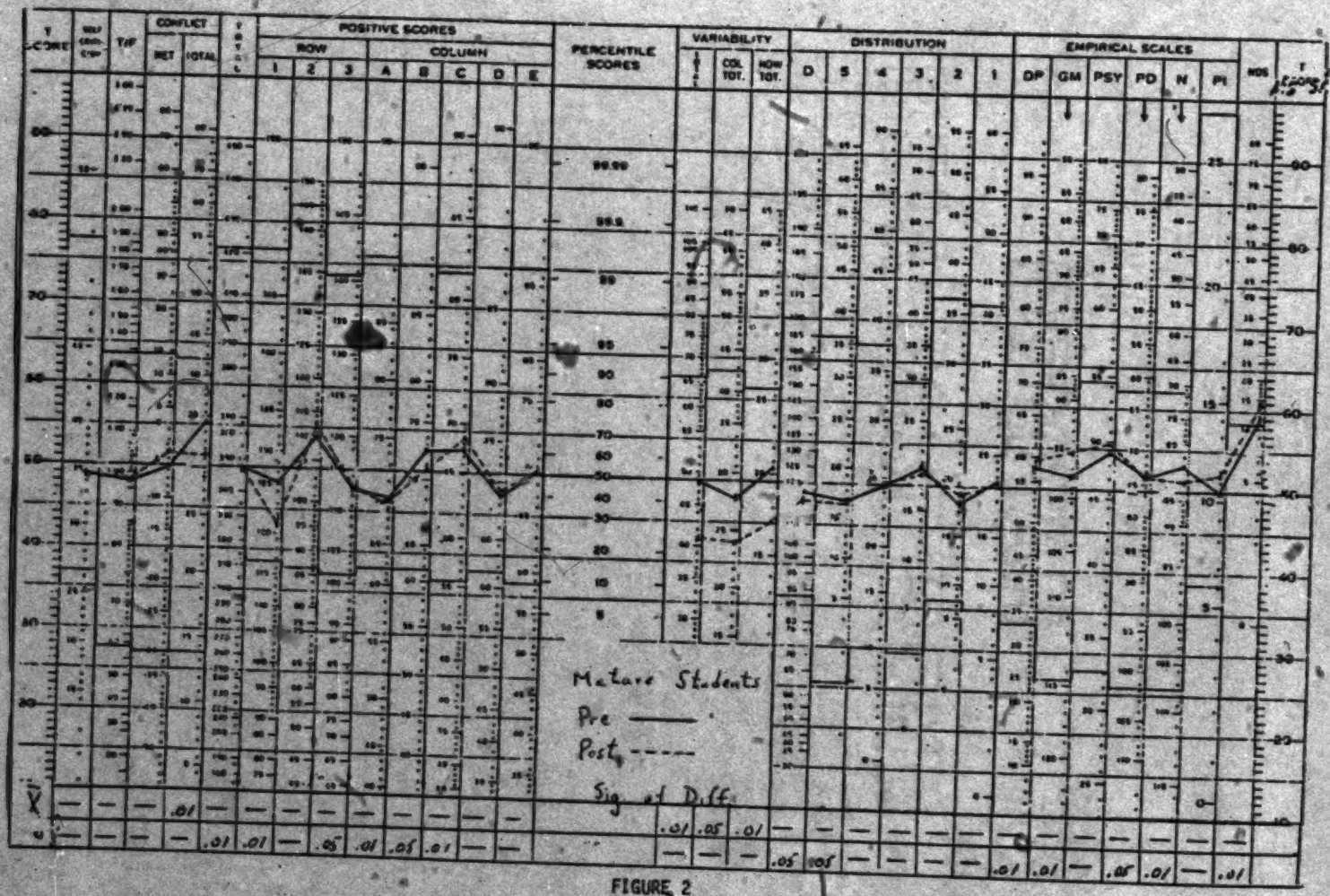

FIGURE 2

PRE AND POST TEST MEANS AND SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL MATURE (N=26) STUDENTS

Hypothesis 3

There will be no significant change in self-concept of regular students after successful completion of one trimester at the College.

In Table 5, the change in Total P mean score is insignificant, so null hypothesis 3 is confirmed. However, t tests for significance of difference between correlated means produce a significant difference on 2 scores--Total Conflict and Personal Self. Figure 3 shows that these 2 scores are in a positive direction. The significant change in these scores indicates less confusion and general conflict in self perception and a greater sense of personal worth and adequacy. It is also noted from Figure 3 that there is a suggested trend, although statistically insignificant, toward a more positive, healthy concept of self on all 29 variables.

t tests for significance of difference between correlated variances reveal a significant difference on 6 variables. In all of these cases and on 19 non-significant variables, the variability is higher on the post-test. This indicates some individual movement within the regular student group and that after 4 months of successful study, this group tended to obtain more extreme scores without significantly influencing the group mean scores.

Hypothesis 4

There will be no difference in initial self-concept between successful and non-successful students at the College.

In Table 6, the difference between Total P scores is significant

TABLE 5

PRE AND POST GROUP MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE TESTS FOR 75 SUCCESSFUL REGULAR STUDENTS ON THE T.S.C.S. SCALES

Variable	Pre $\bar{X}$	Post $\bar{X}$	t	Pre S.D.	Post S.D.	t
SC	35.56	35.89	-0.25	5.52	28.78	0.10
T/F	1.07	1.08	-0.57	.29	.06	0.09
Net C	- 3.68	-4.09	0.32	13.47	12.41	-0.90
Tot. C	32.13	29.61	2.66**	8.46	8.33	-0.16
Tot. P	340.90	344.57	-1.40	28.78	33.31	1.88
Row 1	124.39	125.43	-1.11	10.06	10.13	0.08
Row 2	106.33	107.77	-1.25	11.70	15.29	3.56**
Row 3	110.19	111.37	-1.14	11.23	11.94	0.74
Col. A	67.71	68.64	-1.48	7.81	8.24	0.72
Col. B	69.60	69.64	-0.06	7.38	8.13	1.19
Col. C	65.28	66.96	-2.27*	6.99	8.30	1.97*
Col. D	69.99	70.15	-0.19	8.95	9.61	0.84
Col. E	68.33	69.18	-1.27	6.88	7.18	0.48
Tot. V	45.45	44.39	0.92	10.93	11.75	0.78
Col. V	26.76	26.17	0.79	6.80	8.19	2.11*
Row V	18.69	18.21	0.66	6.14	6.07	-0.11
D	108.81	110.49	-0.70	22.46	29.07	3.16**
5	13.86	14.40	-0.56	9.17	10.61	1.68
4	27.61	27.35	0.31	8.31	8.22	-0.12
3	22.13	21.77	0.35	8.68	11.19	2.85**
2	19.31	18.61	0.82	6.86	8.10	1.69
1	17.08	17.87	0.88	8.38	10.23	2.32
DP	55.61	55.84	-0.25	9.63	10.72	1.30
GM	95.31	96.49	-1.43	8.79	9.27	0.64
Psy.	48.37	47.71	1.30	4.99	5.62	1.34
PD	73.12	73.09	0.02	8.82	9.86	1.24
N	81.88	83.37	-1.56	9.57	10.92	1.56
PI	10.80	10.87	-0.16	4.17	3.98	-0.53
NDS	11.53	11.85	-0.32	11.64	10.55	-1.18

**$p < .01$

*$p < .05$

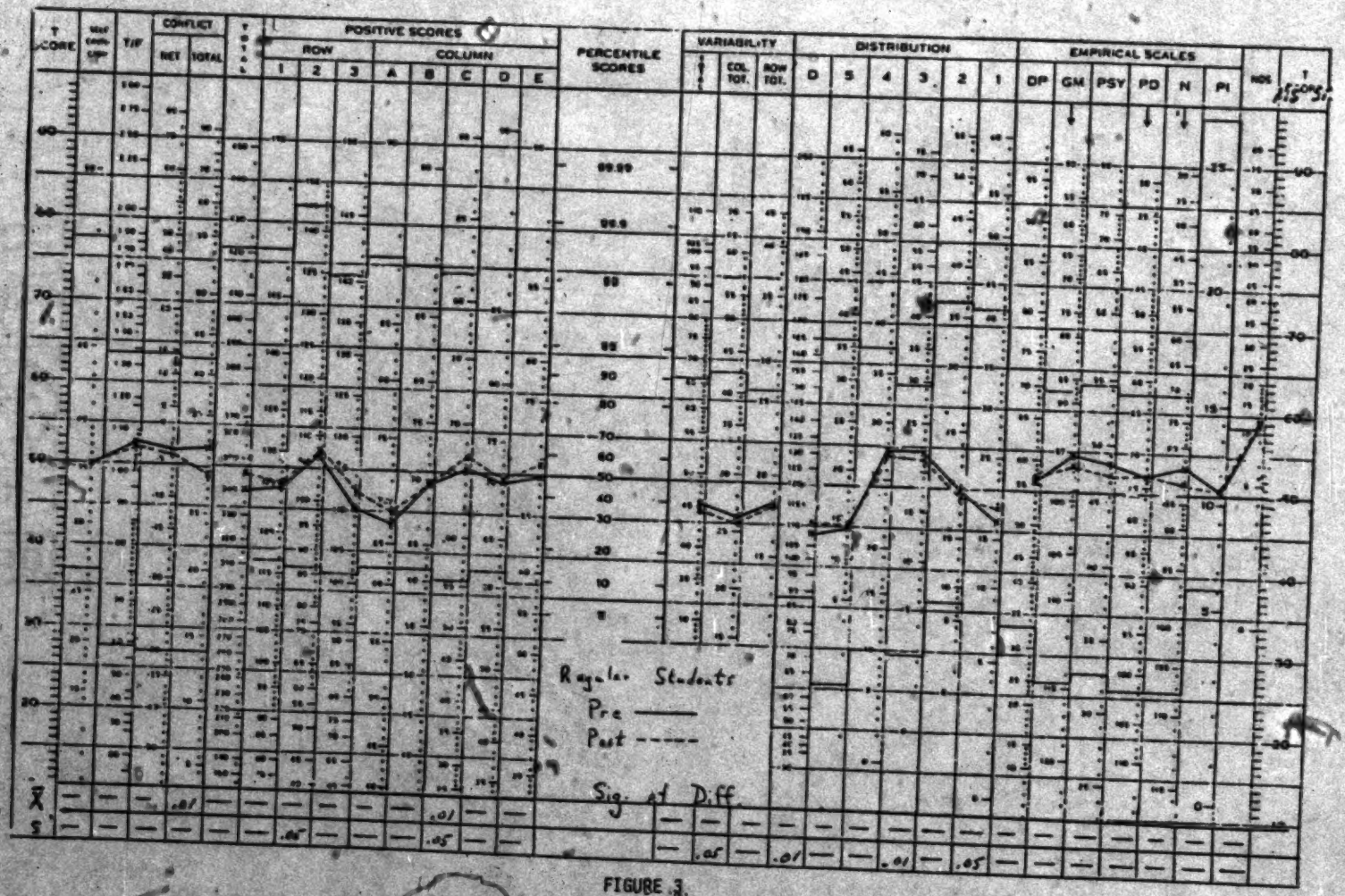

FIGURE 3.

PRE AND POST TEST MEANS AND SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL REGULAR (N=75) STUDENTS

at the .05 level of confidence, so the null hypothesis is rejected. *t* tests for significance of difference between independent means show a significant difference on 9 variables--Total P, Identity Self, Behavior Self, Moral-Ethical Self, Family Self, Distribution, Number of "1" responses, General Maladjustment, and Personality Disorder. Figure 4 illustrates that those students who were unsuccessful had initial self-concepts that were lower and more deviant than those who proved to be successful after four months of study. All P scores are lower for the unsuccessful students, (5 out of 9 are statistically significant), which indicates that they were doubtful about their own worth and had less faith and confidence in themselves than the successful students. The distribution scores are more deviant in that these students were not as clearly able to confirm what they were or deny what they were not, and all of the empirical scales, except Defensive Positive show a greater similarity to maladjusted groups.

F tests for significance of difference between independent variances produce only 2 significant scores. This finding in itself is insignificant when considering 29 variables.

t tests conducted on the data obtained from unsuccessful regular and mature students to determine the difference between means and variances show no significant differences and are not reported.

TABLE 6

PRE-TEST GROUP MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE TESTS FOR 101 SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS AND 32 UNSUCCESSFUL STUDENTS ON THE T.S.C.S. SCALES

Variable	Successful $\bar{X}$	Unsuccessful $\bar{X}$	t	Successful S.D.	Unsuccessful S.D.	F
SC	35.40	34.81	0.30	5.73	4.65	1.30
T/F	1.07	1.05	0.52	.29	.33	1.52
Net C	- 4.20	- 3.28	-0.32	13.43	15.60	1.35
Tot. C	32.83	32.79	-0.08	9.30	7.95	1.37
Tot. P	342.65	328.72	2.51*	27.27	27.79	1.04
Row 1	124.65	120.06	2.34*	9.61	9.93	1.07
Row 2	107.23	103.16	1.70	11.78	11.86	1.01
Row 3	110.77	105.50	2.50*	10.72	9.32	1.32
Col. A	68.33	66.28	1.37	7.35	7.44	1.02
Col. B	70.30	66.22	2.75**	7.32	7.28	1.01
Col. C	65.80	64.22	1.14	6.66	7.39	1.23
Col. D	69.69	65.47	2.36*	8.74	9.05	1.07
Col. E	68.53	66.53	1.37	7.15	7.38	1.07
Tot. V	46.20	45.81	0.17	11.50	11.69	1.03
Col. V	27.03	26.38	0.43	7.48	7.37	1.03
Row V	19.17	19.44	-0.22	6.06	5.82	1.08
D	110.96	101.78	2.10*	22.02	20.14	1.20
5	14.64	12.78	1.07	9.11	6.68	1.86*
4	26.79	26.09	0.42	8.35	7.48	1.25
3	21.73	25.25	-1.90	8.47	10.90	1.66
2	18.78	21.63	-1.94	7.20	7.32	1.04
1	18.05	14.25	2.26*	8.49	7.59	1.25
DP	56.23	54.63	0.89	9.31	7.46	1.55
GM	95.91	91.72	2.43*	8.43	8.65	1.06
Psy.	48.54	50.00	-1.23	5.28	7.34	1.93*
PD	73.24	67.88	2.98**	8.76	9.26	1.12
N	81.90	78.84	1.60	9.06	10.53	1.35
PI	10.71	10.38	0.42	3.99	3.93	1.03
NDS	11.54	15.13	-1.45	11.47	14.22	1.54

**$p < .01$

*$p < .05$

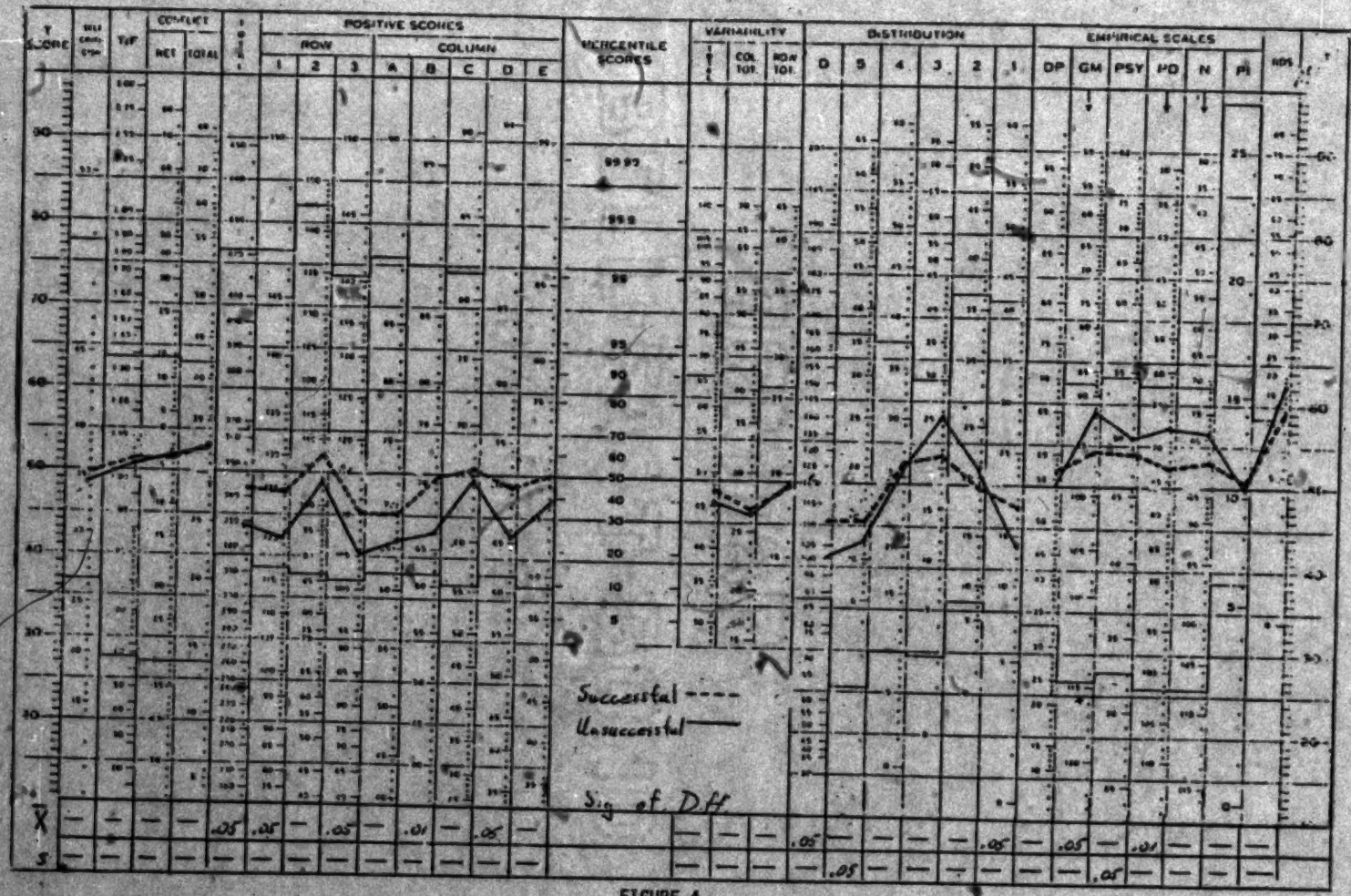

FIGURE 4.

PRE-TEST MEANS AND SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL (N=101) AND UNSUCCESSFUL (N=32) STUDENTS

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a summary and discussion of the research findings of this study. Further questions and implications for continued research are suggested where appropriate.

SUMMARY

This study presents data that demonstrates no significant difference in self-concept between a sample of students who were successful in high school (regular students) and a sample of students who were previously unsuccessful in completing high school (mature students).

In attempting to determine the effects of successful completion of the first term at the College on the self-concept of the students, the data indicates that no significant change occurred for either the regular or mature student groups. The findings do suggest, though, that some individuals did experience a change in self-concept. Some of the individual changes were in a positive direction and some were in a negative direction. These changes tended to cancel each other out, leaving the group scores relatively unchanged.

The final finding is that students who withdrew from the College or were not able to pass at least 4 courses had an initial self-concept that was significantly lower than those students who were successful in completing at least 4 courses in their first term at the College. The data demonstrates that the student group deemed

unsuccessful had a negative view of themselves and were doubtful about their own worth and value before entry into the College. They also had more similarities in terms of self description to maladjusted groups than the successful students.

DISCUSSION

Research in the area of self-concept and achievement has been relatively consistent in describing dropouts and failures as possessing low self-concepts. However, the lack of longitudinal studies relating to self-concept and failure/withdrawal and the fact that researchers and theorists affirm the stability of self-concept leads the learner of self theory to believe that little can be done outside of psychotherapy to enhance the view that non-achievers have of themselves.

This study helps to confirm previous findings of low self-concept being related to non-achievement. Students deemed not successful at the College did possess a significantly lower self-concept than students deemed successful. However, the point which is not mentioned in other studies is that although people tend to have a lower than average self-concept at the time of, and previous to withdrawal or failure, this does not mean that they are doomed to a life of low self-concept.

Students entering the College under the mature student regulation were not previously successful in completing high school. An assumption made in this study, based on previous research findings, is that the mature students at the College had a low self-concept at the time of withdrawal and/or failure in high school. The results of this study indicate that there is essentially no difference in self-

concept between regular and mature students. Holding the assumption to be true, it is evident that certain changes in self-concept did occur between the time of withdrawal from high school and entrance into the College. The results of this study seem to suggest then, that a low self-concept is not as stable as proposed by some theorists and researchers (Boyle, 1967; Fitts, 1971; Meese, 1961), although an average or high self-concept may very well be a stable entity once it is clearly differentiated and structured. It appears that while one is failing or not coping, necessitating withdrawal from a program of studies, he has a view of himself as unworthy and undesirable and he has little faith or confidence in himself. However, the findings in this study are suggesting that various other experiences, be they personal, social, emotional, intellectual, etc., enable people to find some worth and value in themselves. The perception of "once a low self-concept, always a low self-concept" does not necessarily hold true. It is suggested by the writer that people are able to discover and develop competencies outside of the academic realm and hence develop self-confidence and an appreciation for themselves. This implies that possibly withdrawal from an educational setting is not as undesirable as maintained by most, especially if continued failure in that setting contributes to a lowering of self-concept and a low self-concept contributes to failure.

Because the "chicken and egg" question still has not been adequately answered, ie., what comes first, a high self-concept or academic achievement, the question of what to do with the failing student possessing a low self-concept is still at hand. Should the high school counsellor be working on self-concept in an attempt to

improve chances of academic success? Should extra academic help be given to improve chances of academic success, hence improving self-concept? Should the student be encouraged to drop out and be given an opportunity to find his area of competence outside of an academic setting and build his self-concept to the point where he will see himself as a worthy individual and then re-attempt an academic or vocational program to his liking? Hopefully, these questions will be answered through continued research on self-concept.

In attempting to determine the effects of a successful academic experience on the self-concept, this study indicates that, for the sample studied, little change in self-concept occurred in 4 months. Although many variables may have had an influence on the data, such as increased age, increased maturity, etc., and there was no non-college group with which to compare, the indications are that after 4 months of successful study a slight, but statistically insignificant enhancement of the self-concept was reported by both regular and mature students. However, the findings in this study are not conclusive enough to say that someone with a low self-concept will necessarily develop a high self-concept through a successful academic experience. The suggestion is, that education alone is not a sufficient condition to produce desirable changes in self-concept, and may, in certain situations, involve a change in self-concept in an undesirable direction at the college level.

Before anything can be stated conclusively about the effects of education on the self-concept, much more research is needed. In today's society, many people are counselled (professionally and non-

professionally) into educational programs as a means to increase self-actualization. For some, this may be desirable, for others, disastrous. Before this may be done with true competence, research will have to answer the following questions: Who can benefit from formal education and who can not? What effect does initial self-concept have on self-concept change? How do certain programs of study affect certain self-concepts? How do certain self-concepts affect performance in certain programs of study? When research is able to answer these questions, professionals in the educational and helping fields will be more competent in assisting people to develop more satisfying and fulfilling lives through the educational process.

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APPENDIX A

DATA SHEET

NAME: _____ PROGRAM: _____

MARITAL STATUS (Circle): Single. Married. Separated. Divorced. Other.

AGE: ____ SEX (Circle): Male. Female. COLLEGE STATUS (Circle): Regular Student
Mature Student.

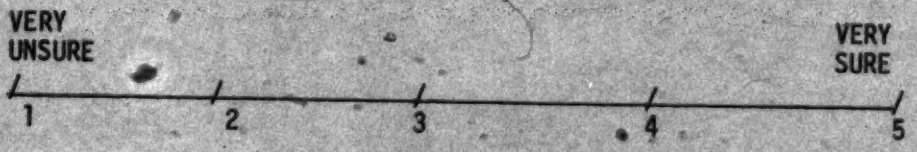
PREDOMINANT BACKGROUND (Circle): Urban. Rural.

RECENT BACKGROUND (Last Year) (Circle): Urban. Rural.

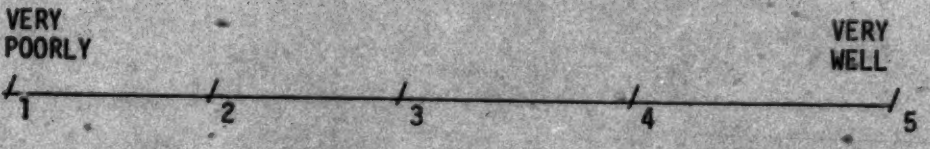
ON THE FOLLOWING SCALES, CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER.

1. Rate the importance of successful completion of a college program for YOU.

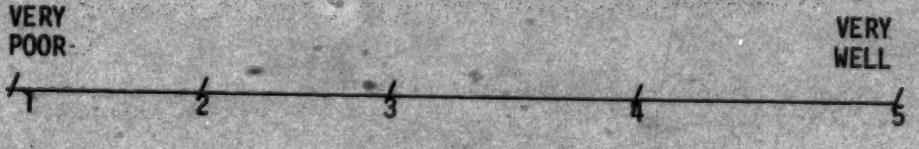
2. Rate your degree of confidence (ie. how sure you are) that you are in the proper program for YOU



3. Rate how you EXPECT to do academically in your first term at Grant MacEwan Community College.



4. Rate how YOU would describe your level of achievement in high school.



5. Briefly, state WHY you achieved as you did in high school.

APPENDIX B

INSTRUCTIONS

I am conducting a study to see how college students view themselves. In order to do this, I am requesting your co-operation in filling out a questionnaire and a short data sheet. The questionnaire will be administered to you again in December for comparison.

The study will be examining college students as a group and not as individuals, so you can be assured that your answers will not be looked at on an individual basis. If you wish to see the results after December, this may be arranged by seeing me at a later date.

Now, examine the data sheet that I am distributing (distribute data sheet). The information requested at the top is self-explanatory. Please fill in the information. Are there any questions? Now, circle the appropriate number on the scales for questions 1 to 4. For question 5, try to be as honest as possible in describing WHY you achieved as you did in high school.

Now, turn your attention to the Tennessee Self Concept Scale. Let us go through the instructions together. (Read T.S.C.S. instructions and have them start).

--Upon completion, collect all materials and thank students for their co-operation.

APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY OF T.S.C.S. SCALES

Self Criticism (SC) is a scale measuring defensiveness, openness, honesty in self description and capacity for self-criticism. Low scores indicate defensiveness and high scores extreme self-criticism.

True/False Ratio (T/F) is a measure of response set on the tendency to define the self by agreeing with the content of items rather than by rejecting them. Scores near or below the mean are optimal. Scores in this range indicate that the individual defines his self-concept by the dual process of affirming what he is and rejecting what he is not with a slightly heavier emphasis on the latter process.

The Conflict scores measure internal consistency in self description or conflicting and contradicting self perceptions. If a person affirms two contradictory statements about himself, or if he denies both, then his responses conflict with or contradict each other. The Net Conflict score measures the directional trend of such conflict and the Total Conflict score measures the total conflict regardless of direction. The optimal range for both of these scores is below the mean.

The Positive (P) scores are measures of self-esteem or the positive-negative level of self-regard. The 3x5 matric consists of three Row Scores, which reflect the individual's perception of his self from an internal frame of reference and the Column Scores reflect the perceptions from an external frame of reference.

Total P. This is the most important single score. It reflects the overall level of self-esteem. Persons with high scores tend to like themselves, feel that they are persons of value and worth, have confidence in themselves, and act accordingly. People with low scores are doubtful about their own worth, see themselves as inadequate, often feel depressed, anxious and unhappy and have little faith or confidence in themselves.

Row 1 Score--Identity. This score reflects what the person sees as his basic identity, what he is.

Row 2 Score--Self Satisfaction. This score comes from those items that describe how one feels about the self that he perceives. In general, this score reflects the level of self satisfaction or self acceptance.

Row 3 Score--Behavior. This score comes from those items that say "this is what I do". It measures the individual's perception of his own behavior or the way he functions.

Column A--Physical Self. This score reflects the person's perception of his body, state of health, appearance, skills and sexuality.

Column B--Moral-Ethical Self. This score reflects the person's perception of his moral worth, relationship to God, feelings of being a "good" or "bad" person, and satisfaction with one's religion or lack of it.

Column C--Personal Self. This score reflects the person's sense of personal worth, his feeling of adequacy as a person and his evaluation of his personality apart from his body or his relationship to others.

Column D--Family Self. This score reflects one's feelings of adequacy, worth, and value as a family member.

Column E--Social Self. This is another "self as perceived in relation to others" category but pertains to "others" in a more general way than Family Self. It reflects the person's sense of adequacy and worth in his social interactions with other people in general.

The Variability (V) Scores reflect the variation in level of self-regard within each Column (Col. V) and within each Row (Row V), the Total V Score being a summation of the other two subtotals. High V scores indicate inconsistency, variation and lack of integration among the different subselves. Scores below the mean are optimal and suggest internally consistent, well-integrated self-concepts.

The Distribution (D) Score is a summary score of the way one distributes his answers across the five variable choices. It is interpreted as a measure of certainty about the way one perceives himself. High scores indicate that the person is very definate and certain in what he says about himself while low scores mean just the opposite. The number of "5" (Completely true), "4" (Mostly true), "3" (Partly true-partly false), "2" (Mostly false) and "1" (Completely false) reponses to the 100 items are simply counted and recorded. Together these scores provide a picture of how the individual goes about defining his self-concept.

The Empirical Scales, in contrast to the P scores, have no theoretical rationale but are based solely on empirical data--namely item analysis which utilize whatever cluster of test items that differentiates one group of people from other groups.

Defensive Positive (DP) Score. This is another measure of defensiveness or the effectiveness of psychological defenses. Very high scores indicate positively distorted self-concepts and very low scores indicate a lack of normal defenses. Well integrated people generally score near, or slightly above the mean on DP.

General Maladjustment (GM) Score. This scale measures the kind of personal maladjustment characteristic of psychiatric patients. It reflects degree but not type of pathology. A high score for GM is interpreted as indicating high maladjustment.

Psychosis (Psy.) Score. This scale is composed of items which best differentiate psychotic patients from patients with other psychiatric diagnoses and non-patients. A high score does not necessarily indicate that an individual is psychotic but means that he is describing his self-concept in the same ways as psychotic patients describe theirs. Well-integrated people tend to score between the 10th and 50th percentiles.

Personality Disorder (PD) Score. A profile high on PD shows a self-concept similarity to people with one of the many types of personality disorders.

Neurosis (N) Score. This scale measures self-concept similar - to people with various neuroses. High scores on N indicate neurotic tendencies and often reflect anxiety and depression.

Personality Integration (PI) Score. This score is a measure of personality strength--one's positive assets and resources. Deviant populations consistently score low on PI but all of the studies with well-integrated people show high PI scores.

The Number of Deviant Signs (NDS) Score summarizes the deviant features in the self-concept (scores exceeding the normal limits and deviant fluctuations in the profile) across all scores. It is the best single index of psychopathology. High scores indicate deviant self-concepts; well-integrated people have low NDS scores.